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ABSTRACT

The history and current status of honors programs at the University of Maryland, College Park, are discussed, with some reference to special recent programming for gifted students. The following historical developments are covered: honors programs at Columbia College in the early 1900s, the idea of honors as a separate upper division program at Swarthmore College, and St. John's College's Great Books curriculum, which has similarities with honors programs. Honors programs were established at the University of Maryland during the 1950s and 1960s, and the earliest programs were conducted by departments. The environment during President Elkins' administration was an impetus for the honors program. The current impact of the University of Maryland's honors programs on the university and the general population was evaluated, based on a survey of public and private high school counselors, honors program faculty, students in departmental honors and general honors programs, and students not in an honors program. Survey results for each of these groups are presented in detail, and an ethnographic analysis of the general honors program is presented. In addition to examining characteristics of the general honors program and students enrolled in the program, admissions data for academically talented students are considered. (SW)

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HONORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND:
A STATUS REPORT ON PROGRAMS FOR TALENTED STUDENTS

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COMMITMENT TO THE GIFTED AND TALENTED IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The American commitment to the gifted and talented student has followed, at best, an uneven road. In general, educators and policy makers have advocated an egalitarian or democratic approach to education. However, the democratic ideal leaves unanswered the question "Should equality mean 'equality of opportunity' or 'equality of outcome'?" Gardner (1961) suggests that the dilemma raised is whether to encourage individual performance to the end that each person becomes all that he or she is able or to restrain individual performance so that differences in results may be reduced.

This dilemma is addressed by looking at programs for gifted and talented students and, in particular, by looking at Honors programs. According to C.G. Austin, an Honors program is a "planned set of arrangements to serve the needs of talented students more adequately than if the matter were left entirely to the initiative of interested persons" (Austin, 1975). This modern definition belies the controversy which has surrounded programs created especially for gifted students.

Proponents of Honors approaches wish to encourage individual performance. The stated goal is not to create an elite group with special privileges and opportunities, a creme de la creme. Rather, it is to prevent the cream from going sour. They argue that what is right about the Honors approach -- the encouragement and support, the potential for intellectual and emotional growth -- is right for all students. Providing environments that facilitate such growth may vary, however, according to the individual and his or her ability.

Opponents argue that providing special environments for those already ahead of their peers fosters elitism. Denying some children the opportunity to participate in certain educational experiences is not seen as the way to improve school performances. Children learn from the differences between them as much as from the similarities; homogeneous grouping based on cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics ignores this possibility. Special programs should be developed with all students in mind.

The purpose of this report is not to arbitrate this argument. Rather, it will look at the history and development of programs for the gifted student with special reference to the development of university Honors programs. This is followed by a discussion of the history of Honors at the University of Maryland and finally by an analysis of Honors programs as they exist at the University today.

From the outset, the view presented here is that fostering special privilege and elite status is a different issue than providing educational environments which stimulate personal growth. Ralph Turner's (1960) discussion of 'contest' and 'sponsored' mobility suggests a view that the accepted mode of upward mobility shapes the value of particular schools programs:

> The governing objective of contest mobility is to give elite status to those who earn it, while the goal of sponsored mobility is to make the best use of the talents in society by sorting each person into his proper niche. In different societies the conditions of competitive struggle may reward quite different attributes... (p. 857)

In other words, the prevailing norm of upward mobility influences what is valued/valuable in the school experience. By itself, the content of an educational setting does not determine movement through the stratification system.

Gardner (1961) makes another point relevant to the discussion when he suggests that neither equal opportunity nor equal outcome, when taken alone, serves the democratic ideal. Rather, the combination of the two philosophical perspectives meets the needs of society:

> There is evidence, in short, that the critical lines of tension in our society are between "emphasis on individual performance" and "restraints on individual performance." This tension will never be resolved and "never should be resolved" (our emphasis)...
> ...No democracy can give itself over to extreme emphasis on individual performance and still remain a democracy -- or to extreme equalitarianism and still retain its vitality (28-9).

As a result, the nation alternates between the two patterns or must find a way of combining equalitarianism with the pursuit of individual excellence. University Honors programs may be an example of this latter approach.

Defining Honors Programs

Earlier, a brief quote from C. Grey Austin was given to describe Honors programs. Austin, University Honors Director at Ohio State University, suggests that it is necessary for an educational institution to meet the educational and intellectual needs of the brightest and ablest students in specific

programs rather than in a haphazard or by chance manner. His objectives for such programs are to:

1. Identify students whose ability and motivation are so high that their academic needs would not be adequately met by existing programs;
2. Provide academic opportunities of such caliber that the students thus identified are challenged to perform at the highest level of excellence of which they are capable and through which they may become independent learners;
3. Establish an environment that will encourage the aspirations of and the achievements by these students and that will foster in them dignity, self-esteem, and a sense of their potentials; and
4. Derive from the program benefits for the wider academic community such as focusing attention on quality education and a concept of excellence, giving faculty members the psychic reward that derives from working with gifted students, and attracting to the campus scholars and speakers who would not otherwise be there (Austin, 1975, 161-2).

Special programs, by definition, allow changes in existing programs. The existence of honors sections may go hand in hand with the development of supplemental courses for students at the other end of the continuum. For example, both honors and compensatory programs allow students to work at levels suited to their abilities. Rather than associating Honors with elitism, Honors can be seen as a way of providing opportunities for students in the highest ranges of ability to get the most out of their educational experiences.

Ultimately, the view presented in this report is that Honors programs are in the interest of the wider academic community and not a mechanism to provide special advantages for a future elite group. By providing an image of excellence and by stimulating the brightest students to their best efforts, the University and society benefit.

Understanding the historical development of Honors programs provides the reader with the origin of this interpretation. In later sections the specific history of honors at the University of Maryland and a current status report will be presented.

A Short History of Honors as it Developed at American Colleges

American colleges in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided a 'liberal education' (Butts and Cremin, 1953). This implied a broadly general rather than narrowly specialized course of study leading to the 'well-rounded' development of the individual. In addition to a breadth of study, liberal education was associated with intellectual rather than utilitarian pursuits and education was seen as an end to itself rather than a means to some end.

By the time of the American Revolution, nine colleges had been established in Colonial America.[2] And according to Butts and Cremin, while the motives for establishing seven of them had been religious or with a sectarian bent, two showed signs of growing practical and scientific interest (1953, 81). Cremin (1970) points out an expansion of the mathematical and scientific programs was accompanied by enlargement in the course in moral philosophy and the re-entry of certain traditional professional studies into the college curriculum.

During the nineteenth century, the traditional liberal arts curriculum came under attack. The classical/literacy curriculum was perceived as more suited to the needs of an aristocracy than the practical needs of a country rapidly expanding (Brubacher, 1966). The natural sciences came to be increasingly viewed as a vital subject of study and the establishment of technical institutes (RPI, MIT) bears witness to this fact.

The relationship of Honors programs to curricular reform can be interpreted in two ways. First, Honors may be seen as a retrogressive effort to maintain the classical curriculum of the liberal education targeted for a select portion of the population. Second, Honors programs may be perceived as a way of providing additional opportunities for those wishing to enrich their college experience by providing alternatives to the prescribed curriculum. In this sense, Honors may be interpreted as being in the spirit of democratic reform because it provided alternatives to the college curriculum.

The perception of Honors in one way or the other influenced the direction and implementation of programs. When Honors was perceived as providing greater alternatives it was more readily accepted than when it was seen as providing opportunities for a selected few.

From 1872 to 1897 Harvard president Charles Eliot instituted an expanded elective system in which students had greater alternatives available to them.

Joseph Cohen suggests that the expanded elective system was seen "as a liberating reform in keeping with nineteenth-century democracy" (1966, 13). And according to R. Freeman Butts, the goal of the elective system was to meet the demands of students and the community for a useful education. The changes were perceived as reforms in higher education to meet the demands of a modernizing society (Butts, 1973).

In 1903 Harvard Professor A. Lawrence Lowell attempted to establish an Honors College. In 1909 Yale President Arthur Twining Hadley proposed an Honors plan. In spite of providing curriculum alternatives, neither plan was enacted. The question of why Honors was not seen in the same way as an expanded elective system is answered by referring the reader to an earlier point which suggested that the content of an educational environment is often secondary to the perception of its importance. In this case, Honors may have been perceived as providing special advantages aside from the particular content of course knowledge and rejected as undemocratic.

Columbia College

A more detailed example of the Honors approach is found by looking at Columbia College, New York (Buchler, 1954). In 1909 a three-year program of supplemental reading followed by an oral examination was established. In 1912, a second program was started which included weekly conferences and student disputations. To the extent that these programs provided enriched environments aimed at improved student performances, they are considered, at least implicitly, Honors programs.

The first explicit program of Honors at Columbia was the "General Honors" program established in 1920 under the direction of its proposer, English professor John Erskine. It called for the "systematic reading of masterpieces in poetry, history, philosophy and science and individual work in some chosen field of scholarship under the direction of a designated Honors Director" (Buchler, 1954, 56). At about the same time, Columbia also introduced a general education course required for all freshmen, known as 'Contemporary Civilization." Taken together, General Honors and the Contemporary Civilization may be indicative of a commitment on the part of the College to interdepartmental collaboration (Buchler, 1954, 56).

General Honors at Columbia emphasized small group study, informality, and outside reading. Sections were composed of about fifteen students and used a discussion/exchange of ideas approach. Two faculty members, of differing approaches, were chosen to preside over weekly meetings held at night with no specific time limit.

The goal of General Honors and CC were for the student to gain some "real understanding" of some of the great literary masterpieces. Erskine's approach was to suggest that these works

> could be enjoyed; that indeed they existed primarily to be enjoyed; that they were storehouses of rich experience that was meant to be shared (Buchler, 164).

Erskine argued that masterpieces had first been popular in a particular period of time. The people who had first read these books/seen these plays had not waited for scholarly lectures in order to enjoy them.

In so stating, Erskine gave voice to the view that excitement and vitality have an educational importance. Erskine suggested that it was the young teachers who made General Honors possible for they gave life and enthusiasm to the great works.

During the 1920's, Columbia continued its efforts to meet the individual needs of students. One of the results of this was the institution of a system of electives whereby a student could plan an individual course of study. One of the byproducts of the elective system was a less competitive atmosphere since student programs could be more individually tailored.

In 1928, the General Honors program at Columbia was dropped. This may have been because of the perception that General Honors ran contrary to the less competitive atmosphere that was developing. However, the dismantling of General Honors should not be associated with a rejection of the ideas that Honors represented, namely small classes/lively debate and discussion/relating classical to the here and now/humanistic studies. Rather, it represented a rejection of the idea that these pursuits deserve special recognition and honorific titles for the student. For it was hoped that a student would enroll in what later (1932) became the "Colloquium on Great Books" because of interest in the course content and procedures and not for some special honors degree or prestige (Buchler, 122).

Swarthmore College

The beginning of the modern honors approach is usually associated with Swarthmore College and the Honors program developed there under the direction of Swarthmore President, Frank Aydelotte. Aydelotte came to Swarthmore in 1921, at a time when the college was more known for its sports program than its academic programs. Aydelotte, a former Rhodes Scholar, came to Swarthmore at a time when the College was receptive to movement towards academic excellence (Bhatia and Painter, 3).

During his studies at Oxford, Aydelotte was undoubtedly introduced to the pass/Honors approach. Studies and examinations at English universities were separated into two groups, the pass degree and the Honors degree. Students undertaking the former took a less demanding and less specialized course of study/examinations than those pursuing Honors. The requirements for an Honors degree were more specialized and required intensive study in one or two related fields to be followed by a rigorous set of examinations. It is this approach that served as the model for Honors at Swarthmore.

Aydelotte's inaugural address as President of Swarthmore explains his thinking about Honors:

> I do not believe that we should deny to the average, or below average student, the benefit of a college education. He needs this training, and we need his humanizing presence in the colleges, but we should not allow him to hold back his more brilliant companions from doing that quality of work which will in the end justify the time and money we spend in education (Swarthmore College Faculty, 1941).

And the program that Aydelotte developed emphasized the depth of understanding rather than an accumulation of generalized knowledge.

At the beginning of the junior year students were selected to enter a special program, separate from the normal college courses. Two subjects, instead of the normal four to six, were studied each semester. The subjects were to be related in such a way that a student would concentrate efforts in two or three contiguous areas.

For each subject, the student attended weekly meetings with three to six other students and an instructor. This weekly "seminar" was informal and often met at the instructor's home or at some equally informal setting.

In each subject, a student was required to take written and oral examinations, prepared and administered by examiners outside of the College.

Examinations were used to determine what class of Honors (highest, high, honors, or no honors) the student received.

According to Aydelotte (1941), the Honors program that developed was partly the result of planning and partly a matter of expediency. Juniors and seniors were selected so that prerequisites could be completed and performance capabilities could be judged. Informal seminars with three to six students and one faculty member were the result of an overworked faculty not anxious or willing to prepare new lectures. (The seminar format has been maintained through the present with the rationale that small groups, informally convened, lead to more meaningful participation.) Taking subjects in related areas was based on the idea that concentration of pursuit better served the needs of able students. External examiners freed the faculty from the dual role of teacher and evaluator and fostered an advocacy relationship.

Honors at Swarthmore has continued to the present without major change. And although the approach has attracted a great deal of attention it has not been widely emulated. According to Joseph Cohen:

> Because of the inescapably elitist nature of his British model, the restriction to the upper division, and the atypicality of Swarthmore itself, the public sector of American colleges and universities remained in the end largely unaffected by his program (Cohen, 10-11).

Further, it is suggested that Honors, as defined at Swarthmore, ignored the different patterns of social ascent through education characteristic of England and the United States. As a result the idea of Honors as a separate upper division program had limited impact on American higher education.

St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland

Though not typically thought of as an honors approach, the Great Books curriculum at St. John's College is included in this section because its rationale has commonalities with honors, i.e., the training of intellect and the attempt to meet a perceived decline in standards and intellectual performance.

In 1937, while President of the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins, and others, persuaded the faculty at St. John's College to adopt a curriculum based on the greatest books of all time. The 'greatness' of a book was judged

by its status as a classic, a book relevant to every age. The curriculum consisted, in part, of critical reading of the one hundred greatest books of all time. Students also studied mathematics, laboratory science, music, and languages, and attended weekly lectures (Morris, 1961). The curriculum was prescribed and each student went through the same course of study.

The idea behind the Great Books curriculum was that if someone could master the greatest books of all time, then certainly this person could find his/her way in the present era, that "...a thorough saturation in the greatest thinking of the greatest minds is the way to train the intellect" (Morris, 350). Science labs attempted to recreate the important experiments of the great minds of science: Galileo, Kepler, Newton, et al. By "actually imitating the greatest intellects of our scientific past, the student begins to sense the inner workings of those intellects, in a sense sharing in their genius for experimental design" (Morris, 351). By rubbing elbows with genius, it was hoped that some might rub off.

Although the Great Books curriculum remains at St. John's today, it has never really spread to other colleges (and perhaps that was not the intention of those who founded it). The exclusion of new knowledge becomes increasingly difficult in light of the 'future shock' of a world changing rapidly. The lack of alternative paths for students of different inclinations also seems particularly constraining. However, the idea of liberal studies, of intellectual discipline, has a large following in Honors programs across the country. In this sense, the Great Books and Honors may be seen as having a common objective, that is, to uplift the thinking of men and women in their dreams, desires, and abilities to carry them out.

Summary

To sum up this first section on the history of Honors, a number of points are made in the discussion. From the history of Columbia, Honors is seen as emphasizing interdepartmental collaboration with the small group study and lively debate format. Excitement and vitality are seen as the life force for curricular development. However, the idea of Honors as a separate or exclusive experience is rejected.

From the Swarthmore experience, the notion of a separate two-year Honors track for a select portion of students is introduced. Honors is seen as informal

discussion with small groups participating in lively debate. Intellectual growth occurs as a result of association with one's gifted peers and concentration of effort. However, the perception of exclusivity prevented the Swarthmore approach from being widely emulated at other colleges.

From the discussion of St. John's, another model is presented which stresses the importance of 'liberal studies' and encourages excellence from the total college population. Seminars, discussions, lectures and independent thinking are intended to lead to the educated citizen in the democratic society. However, the reliance on the great books of the past makes it a model that is not easily adapted to a changing present.

The discussion also introduces the debate between proponents of views favoring special environments for very able students and those who reject this as elitist and undemocratic. The suggestion is made that the two views are not mutually exclusive and that both are part of the healthy growth of the nation.

Another point that is suggested by the discussion is that rather than serving elitist ends, Honors opened up the curriculum. In this sense Honors served as a democratizing force at colleges and universities and curricular changes enacted in Honors programs filtered to the rest of the population.

Finally, the rationale of the modern Honors approach is presented in the views of C.G. Austin. It is proposed that Honors benefit more than just a select group of participants. The image of excellence that Honors encourages provides a model for all students. Faculty derive psychic rewards from being able to work with groups of very able students. The campus atmosphere is enlivened because scholars who might otherwise go elsewhere are attracted to the campus. In this way honors is seen as benefiting the whole university.

In the next section, the particular growth of Honors at UMCP is presented.

The Effort to Promote Excellence

During the 1940's, research on the gifted child included the study of what happens as the child grows older. For example, L. Terman and M. Oden did a twenty-five year followup of Terman's work at Stanford (The Gifted Child Grows Up, 1947) which included discussion of college-age youth.

According to Tannenbaum (1958) after World War II there was an increased interest in programs for the gifted student because of the Cold War demand for scientific and technological leadership.

Another impetus for programs aimed at able youth came as a result of the Russian launching of Sputnik. The notion that the U.S. was first technologically ran contrary to the reality of Russia's ability to launch the first unmanned satellite.

The Harvard Report of 1945 suggested that the schools in the U.S. were aimed at a "somewhat colorless mean, too fast for the slow, too slow for the fast" (Tannenbaum, 36-37). One implication is that schools must meet the needs of the ablest students.

The founding of the Merit Scholarship Program in 1955 is indicative of the growing interest in promoting and rewarding excellence at the college level. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation conducted an annual competition among U.S. citizens enrolled in secondary schools. Students who ranked in the very top of the academic scale were identified by taking a special examination (in recent years this has been the PSAT and SAT). Award winners were given special recognition and sometimes financial assistance to help them through college. Such recognition must have supported efforts to provide special programs for these students once they arrived at college.

The Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS)

The ICSS was set up when a grant was awarded by the Rockefeller Foundation to the University of Colorado to expand its Honors program. The University had established an Honors Program similar to the Columbia model which consisted of small classes with extra readings and group discussions. The Rockefeller Foundation grant was intended for the purpose of expanding the Colorado Program and for the Director of Honors, Dr. Joseph Cohen, to visit other schools and organizations in preparation for a national conference on Honors to be held the following year. A second grant from the Carnegie Foundation provided for yet another conference that year which established the ICSS as a national coordinating body (Bhatia and Painter, 4).

The ICSS served from 1957 to 1965 as a clearinghouse for information and acted to modify and disseminate information about Honors. The idea behind the

ICSS type of Honors was that it should stimulate the whole institution toward quality and therefore benefit every member of the community. According to its founder, Joseph Cohen:

> The greatest benefit of the ICSS type of honors is that it can stimulate towards quality every type of institution of higher learning. It is not an elitist system (emphasis added), but one that aims at raising the standards of students and teachers -- in professional as well as liberal arts institutions -- by providing models to emulate and by increasing motivation. (Cohen, 44-45).

Thus, Honors moves the university towards excellence by providing a standard and standard bearers for an image of excellence to which all can aspire.

The impact of ICSS on colleges and universities around the country is difficult to determine. However, one criterion of success may be the proliferation of Honors programs around the country during its nine years in existence. Its ending should not be interpreted as a rejection of honors, but rather to the success that the Foundation seed money had in promoting honors around the country. ICSS was succeeded by the National Collegiate Honor Council, on the assumption that the colleges and universities could themselves carry the movement forward (Bhatia and Painter, 5). The NCHC remains in existence today with headquarters at the University of Maryland College Park.

Honors at the University of Maryland

During the 1950's and 1960's, Honors programs at the University of Maryland were created where none had existed while existing programs were expanded. The pressures to build Honors that came from outside the University have been discussed in the last section. In order to complete the picture it would be useful to point to some of the forces within the University moving it towards Honors.

The earliest Honors programs were conducted by the departments. During the late 1950's, the Mathematics Department started an Honors Program by recruiting able high school seniors. Dr. Leon Cohen, Chairman of the department, sent letters to high schools in Maryland and the District of Columbia, asking for the names of students showing outstanding abilities in mathematics

and who the high schools felt would benefit from such a program. In 1959, a special one-day orientation was arranged for a group of fifty high school students identified by their schools as outstanding and as interested in attending the University of Maryland.

The purpose of Honors in mathematics was to discover mathematically gifted undergraduates and to offer them the best education possible. Freshman candidates were located by recommendations of high school teachers and/or student scores on placement examinations.

By 1961 the Math Department had 95 students in Freshman Honors courses. What is perhaps most interesting, besides the program, is the response it received from within and from outside the university. Letters in the Math Department files show parents, relatives, and friends recommending individuals to the attention of the department. High school teachers and administrators wrote in not only to recommend students but to congratulate the department on its program ("It is indeed gratifying to see provision made for able math students" -- letter from vice principal of Maryland high school). Letters of support from university President Elkins and Chairman of the Board of Trustees Louis Kaplan, coverage in the local press (Baltimore Sun), lead to the conclusion that the program received a great deal of attention and moral support.

Each department has its own history. The experience of the Mathematics Department may be slightly atypical in that students were recruited for a program that began in their freshman year. However, the idea of providing enriched environments is very similar to the Honors approaches described earlier. Even the idea of dealing with freshmen and not upperclassmen has much in common with the description of Honors at Columbia. Perhaps the idea of recruiting able freshmen was new at Maryland, as was the idea of Honors seminars in non-liberal arts subject matter. In any case, Math Honors, as a four-semester enriched course structure for freshmen and sophomores and as a junior/senior departmental program, still exists at UMCP today.

Excellence Under the Elkins Administration

Wilson Homer Elkins was appointed president of the University of Maryland beginning in the fall of 1954. Dr. Elkins, like Frank Aydelotte, had been a Rhodes Scholar. The commitment to excellence that brought him to Oxford and was nurtured there is revealed in his efforts at the university.

Dr. Elkins arrived at the university at a time when faculty salaries, morale, and participation were at a low ebb. The university's reputation had been hurt by a Middle States Association "Evaluation Report" which had recommended that the university's accreditation be 'reconsidered' in two years' time. Although this did not place the university on probation, it was not the expected vote to renew accreditation (or an indefinite future).

During his first year as president, Dr. Elkins was able to persuade the Maryland Assembly to approve almost $300,000 for a new library and addition to the hospital, and $200,000 for increased operating expenses.

Dr. Elkins' first efforts were aimed at correcting a number of glaring errors at the University, namely satisfying the Middle States Association, improving faculty salaries and working conditions, reducing faculty turnover, and "once internal reforms at Maryland were under way, the administration and faculty set out on a sweeping program to encourage excellence in their students" (Callcott, 389).

Elkins encouraged excellence at the university in many ways, a large part of which was the attempt to generate academic standards. A major step in this direction began in the fall of 1958, when the university enacted an Academic Probation Plan. Students were required to achieve minimum level of achievement or face closer supervision and finally dismissal. A second step in the effort for higher standards was the introduction of pre-college summer session for high school graduates with less than a C average. Along with an orientation, students were required to pass two academic courses in order to be admitted to the freshman class. Though by today's standards these might seem reasonable enough, it was no small job to create a state institution that provided quality instruction while not excluding taxpayers and taxpayers' children.

The attempts to nurture excellence on the part of the Elkins administration should not be interpreted as an attempt to change the priorities of the university by channeling large amounts of funds to train an intellectual elite. Rather, it was seen that a university needed to handle diversity and that this could only be accomplished if programs were suited to individual talents and abilities:

> Growth at the University of Maryland has led to outcroppings of genuine scholarship at the very highest level of academic achievement. But this University must do more than simply serve those who can qualify as the intellectual elite. It must serve the enormously varied tastes and capabilities of larger numbers of people (Elkins, 1978:3).

This suggests that programs for the gifted are part of a larger need of providing equal opportunities for students with a wide range of abilities. Excellence meant meeting the needs of all, while providing opportunities for the very able:

> There is nothing more precious than a gifted mind. Our colleges and universities rise above the commonplace when they make it possible for the truly great thinkers of our time to nurture the creative spirit of our youth. This is the educational process at its finest (Wilson H. Elkins, 1978: cover page).

It is not suggested that Dr. Elkins was the motivating force behind the development of Honors at Maryland because that is simply not the case. Rather, the example he set, and the moral and intellectual support he gave, provided a fertile environment from which Honors was able to grow.

Growth of the General Honors Program

The general development of approaches and programs aimed at nurturing excellence have been discussed in earlier sections of this report. At this point, it is informative to understand the pattern of growth and development of Honors at the University of Maryland.

To anticipate the later discussion, Honors programs developed at the University in order to meet the needs of superior students by providing a more personally suited intellectual experience. As the University grew in size, both the role of the State University in society and kinds of students served there underwent changes. Honors programs were an attempt, albeit on a limited scale, to provide some special attention to those with the greatest abilities.

In the early 1960's, two committees of the University Senate (The General Committee on Educational Policy and the Committee on Programs, Curricula, and Courses) held a joint meeting to discuss, in general terms, the provisions for an Honors program. The University Senate Minutes (1/31/61) points out that many colleges and universities in the United States "have undertaken special programs for more capable students and the merit of these efforts is widely

approved." The Joint Committees then issued a statement outlining an approach towards Honors at the University, which included the following provisions.

(1) Colleges, schools, and departments of the University are encouraged to develop Honors and independent studies most adaptive to their fields.

(2) The chief aim of the Honors and independent studies is to encourage and recognize superior scholarship.

(3) Honors and independent study programs should provide the qualified student with the scholarly freedom to develop initiative and responsibility in the pursuit of knowledge on his part.

(4) Students enrolled in the Honors and independent studies programs enjoy certain privileges with reference to class attendance, library regulations, and other similar matters with regard to which conventional restrictions are superfluous in the case of scholarly and purposeful students.

(5) Successful completion of the program should be appropriately recognized on the diploma and the transcripts of the students' records.

The expectation of the Committees was that discussion would occur within the various schools, departments, and colleges, and that suggestions and proposals for specific programs would be developed.

The idea of Honors, as already stated, was rather general. Specifics were to be determined by those planning the program. But what does seem clear from the previous discussions is that Honors was seen as a way of providing opportunities to work at an enriched and/or accelerated pace; giving qualified students certain privileges; recognizing scholastic achievement; and supporting the creative endeavors of departments, colleges and the university.

In point of fact, many proposals for Honors programs were prepared at the University. Some of the early experiences at the Math Department have already been mentioned. The English Department offered Honors sections of Freshman English so that able students would be freed from the rote and drill of Basic Composition. Sometimes between 1963 and 1965 the College of Physical Education, Recreation, and Health submitted a plan for an Honors Program which permitted freshmen to formally apply based on the high school grade point average. In 1961, the Psychology Department also started an Honors Program for junior and senior majors.

However, at least up until the mid-1960's, Honors was perceived to be a department responsibility. In 1963 the Alumni Association submitted a report

to President Elkins suggesting that all Honors programs at the University be brought under the control of a University Honors director. However, the Senate Committees deliberating the proposal rejected the idea with the suggestion:

> The present procedure of vesting responsibility for honors programs in their respective fields with faculties of the various departments, held more promise for success at this time than moving to a University-wide director (Senate, 5/28/63)

The rejection of a University-wide Honors director suggests strong feeling that Honors was a departmental responsibility. However, it is also indicative of the sentiment that Honors programs should be centrally organized and perhaps expanded.

The Beginning of General Honors at UMCP

In January, 1962, the University Senate approved an Honors and special studies program submitted by the College of Arts and Sciences. The proposal established a set of standards for measuring all departmental Honors and encompassed the following broad guidelines: Departmental Honors were typically seen as a way of providing encouragement and recognition of superior scholarship of junior and senior majors. Students were to be given the opportunity for intensive and independent studies in the hope of their achieving integration and depth in a chosen field of study. Successful completion of an Honors program would be determined by oral and written examinations resulting in the awarding of "highest honors," "high honors," or "no honors."

The proposal by the College of Arts and Sciences also included the suggestion that opportunities for freshmen, in pre-honors courses and programs, should be made available. In suggesting that the proposal be approved, the General Committee on Educational Policy emphasized "the importance of the pre-honors programs and the opportunity for the freshmen to be admitted to the honors programs... in the hope that gradually the honors programs would become generally available beginning with the freshman year" (Senate, 1/30/62). Thus a new ingredient to the definition of Honors was introduced at the University, namely, that Honors should begin at the beginning of a student's academic career.

There are many possible explanations for the expansion of the definition of Honors at the University to include a "General Honors Program." General

Honors attempted to meet the needs of superior students by providing a more personally suited intellectual experience. As the University grew, General Honors became a way of making the University appear less massive and impersonal to incoming students. During the growth years of the 1950's and 1960's, the University wanted to communicate to students that their intellectual development was an important part of their college experience (Conversation with R. Lee Hornbake).

Some departments encouraged this personal identification. Students shared many of the same classes; a prescribed sequence of courses along with requirements for upper level courses contingent on lower level prerequisites promoted closer student-to-student and student-to-faculty interactions (e.g., engineering). This was not the case for all departments and general Honors was a way to provide such opportunities for able students regardless of major.

General Honors supplemented departmental efforts. Freshmen and sophomores with widely different areas of interest were able to participate in an environment suited to their abilities stimulated by equally able peers.

General Honors provided opportunities for students in their earliest years to participate in an enriched academic environment. In practice, this meant earlier identification of potential Honors students and a coordination of efforts aimed at providing appropriate experiences.

The reader should note that the idea of Honors for freshmen and sophomores was consistent with efforts around the country at providing opportunities for able college students. The ICSS, from its inception, promoted the idea that Honors should run continuously and cumulatively through all four years of college.

> The ICSS proposed less emphasis on specialization than had been common. It stressed the importance of a four-year program, one that would include both general and departmental honors. Talented and otherwise promising students, it suggested, should be identified and made to participate in honors as early as possible -- ideally at the time of college entrance (Cohen, 30).

In this sense, though General Honors at College Park may not have been typical of colleges in the U.S., it was consistent with the thinking of the most important intercollegiate honors organization in the country, the ICSS. The development of the General Honors Program at College Park was both consistent with conventional wisdom of the time and an innovative approach at providing a program for able college students.

SURVEY RESULTS

In order to evaluate the impact of the Honors programs, both within the University community and in the general population, the study managers sent questionnaires to school counselors in public and private high schools, the faculty who taught in the Honors programs, students in General Honors, and those students not in General Honors. The results of these surveys are discussed in the following sections.

Survey Results - Guidance Counselors in Maryland

Survey questionnaires were sent to every public high school and half of the private high schools in Maryland. A list of public school counselors was purchased from the Maryland School Counselors Association. A list of private schools was provided by the Admissions Office at UMCP.

The overall response to the survey was good. Of the 206 counselors mailed copies of the surveys, 131 (63.5%) returned the form. The return rate from the public schools was slightly higher than that from private schools. This is attributed to the fact that letters were addressed by name to the head of guidance at each public school. The breakdown of response is given below.

Public School Counselors		Private School Counselors		Total
Contacted	168	Contacted	38	206
Responded	111	Responded	20	131

Counselors were asked to respond to a number of questions concerning their recommendations to students. These responses are presented in tabular form below.

I RECOMMEND THAT TALENTED AND GIFTED STUDENTS ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND TO THE FOLLOWING EXTENT:

Very often	15.3%
Sometimes	64.1%
Rarely	12.2%
Never	2.3%
MISSING	6.1%
	100%

Counselors were asked to choose the most important reasons for recommending that gifted and talented students attend the University. The most often chosen responses were:

Superior programs in student's major	64.1%
Special programs for gifted students	51.9%
Cost of tuition	35.9%
Reputation of school	34.4%

***Multiple Responses Allowed

Counselors were asked if they were aware of the presence of the General Honors Program and the department honors programs at UMCP.

I WAS AWARE THAT UMCP HAS A GENERAL HONORS PROGRAM

Yes	91.6%
No	5.3%
MISSING	3.1%
	100%

I WAS AWARE THAT UMCP OFFERS DEPARTMENTAL HONORS IN SEVERAL AREAS

Yes	80.9%
No	18.3%
MISSING	.8%
	100%

Counselors were asked whether the presence of Honors programs at the University influenced their recommendations to gifted and talented students:

Very much so	26.0%
Somewhat	57.3%
Barely	10.7%
Not at all	3.1%
MISSING	3.1%
	100% (error due to rounding)

Finally, counselors were asked to respond to the statement:

OF THE INFORMATION THAT IS NECESSARY TO ADEQUATELY ADVISE MY STUDENTS ABOUT HONORS PROGRAMS AT UMCP, I NOW HAVE

More than enough	2.3%
Enough	56.5%
Less than enough	36.6%
None at all	3.1%
MISSING	1.5%
	100%

By separating the responses of public and private high school guidance counselors, the following answers to the above question were received.

OF THE INFORMATION THAT IS NECESSARY TO ADEQUATELY ADVISE MY STUDENTS ABOUT HONORS PROGRAMS AT UMCP, I NOW HAVE

Public H.S. Counselors		Private H.S. Counselors
1.8%	More than enough	5.0%
55.9%	Enough	60.0%
37.8%	Less than enough	30.0%
2.7%	None at all	5.0%
1.8%	MISSING	0.0%
100%		100%

This suggests a real need to distribute information about Honors to counselors at both public and private high schools in the State.

Survey Results - Faculty Teaching Honors

Surveys were distributed to 23 faculty members at the University. In most cases, these were given out during class time and filled out at the same time as students were filling out a different questionnaire. In a few cases faculty members returned the form by mail.

What was most surprising was that in the 25 or so classes visited during the study, 23 teachers had taught an Honors class. The original intention had been to make some comparisons between faculty members who had taught Honors and those that had not. However, with only two faculty members in the latter category, it was not possible.

A basic impression is that most faculty members would teach Honors given the opportunity. Basically, lack of department resources and/or lack of a department program prevents a faculty member from teaching Honors courses.

Faculty who had taught an Honors course were asked what motivated them to do so. The response pattern was as follows:

I was invited to do so by the GHP	39.1%
I volunteered based on interest in gifted and talented students	60.9%
I volunteered because of belief in the honors approach	34.8%
I was approached by the department	39.1%
I was approached by students	8.7%

***Multiple Responses Allowed

This tends to support the view that faculty are motivated to teach Honors for different reasons though interest in gifted students was the most often cited response.

Faculty members were asked their impression of the intellectual climate at the University since their arrival and responded:

Noticeably improved	4.3%
Improved a bit	56.5%
No change	30.4%
Declined noticeably	4.3%
MISSING	4.3%
	100% (error due to rounding)

This suggests a pattern that more than half the faculty in the sample feel that the intellectual climate at the University has improved at least somewhat.

Faculty were also asked how long they had been a member of the faculty at the University. For the most part, the faculty were fairly experienced. The pattern:

1 year or less	0
2-5 years	21.7%
6-10 years	34.8%
11-15 years	13.0%
16-20 years	17.4%
20+ years	13%
	100% (error due to rounding)

This suggests that a fairly experienced faculty teach honors courses at the University. The explanation may be that teaching Honors is considered an opportunity that only the most senior of faculty are able to enjoy. If a faculty member is really interested in teaching an honors class, he or she may still not be able to do so for one of a variety of reasons.

In unstructured interviews with faculty members, it was also suggested that different Honors courses are taught by different faculty. Whereas some faculty enjoy the seminar approach of Honors 100 and Honors 300, others prefer the more content oriented departmental Honors and H-Versions. It was suggested by one faculty member that those who teach one type are unlikely to teach the other.

In order to verify this point, faculty were asked the type of Honors courses that they had taught and responded:

Departmental Honors courses (restricted to junior and senior majors)	39.1%
Honors Seminars	39.1%
H-Versions	43.4%

The lack of overlap suggests that most of the faculty in the sample tended to teach one type of Honors course only.

Faculty were asked the extent to which they felt that Honors programs contribute to the intellectual climate on campus and answered:

Major contribution	43.5%
Contribution	43.5%
Minor contribution	8.7%
No contribution	4.3%
	100.0%

Faculty were also asked the extent to which Honors contributed to their satisfaction as teachers. Their responses were:

Very much	56.5%
Somewhat	30.4%
Barely	8.7%
Not at all	4.3%
	100.0% (error due to rounding)

Faculty were asked to choose the greatest benefits of having Honors programs at the University. The three most cited answers were:

Closer student-faculty interaction	70%
Opportunity to work with brightest students	47.8%
Greater opportunity for students to participate in class	34.8%

This seems to indicate an attitude of the faculty that Honors should be a lively sort of class. The opportunity to work with students, the brightest students, is identified by faculty as the most desirable/beneficial aspect of Honors programs on campus.

Faculty were asked to write down the one thing that they like about Honors programs and the one thing they dislike. The responses to these two items on the questionnaire are listed below:

THE ONE THING I LIKE THE MOST ABOUT HONORS COURSES/PROGRAMS:

Brighter students	39.1%
Level of intellectual discourse	8.7%
Educational alternative for gifted students	17.4%
Interdisciplinary format	17.4%
MISSING	17.4%
	100%

THE ONE THING I LIKE THE LEAST ABOUT HONORS COURSES/PROGRAMS:

Too few students	17.4%
Not enough publicity	8.7%
Exclusiveness of program	13%
Not exclusive enough	8.7%
Lack of support for faculty, staff, facility	8.7%
Lack of continuity	4.3%
Lack of organized non-classroom activities of an intellectual nature	4.3%
Intellectual failure of program	13%
Bureaucratic interference	4.3%
MISSING	21.7%
	100% (error due to rounding)

The responses indicated that faculty derive a general satisfaction from working with very bright students. The dislikes are more of a mixed bag. There does seem to be a note of dissatisfaction over the intellectual aspects of Honors courses. This is not directed toward one program in particular, but to Honors in general.

Survey Results - Departmental Honors Students

At the present time there are 31 departmental Honors programs at the University of Maryland College Park. Most of these programs are for junior and senior majors, though there are some exceptions. For example, the Mathematics Department offers a special Honors course sequence for freshmen and sophomore non-majors. Enrollment in these courses is based on demonstrated achievement (as indicated on the SAT-Math or similar tests).

More typical at UMCP is the departmental Honors which requires a student to have declared his/her major and also meet GPA requirements of between 3.0 and 3.5. Students generally enter these programs in their fifth or sixth semester at the University.

A department Honors student must fulfill the department's requirements for graduation as well as the requirements for an Honors degree.

Questionnaires were distributed to Honors students from eight departments. The selection of particular departments was not random. Rather, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies sent letters to ten departments asking for permission to distribute the surveys.

Unlike the GHP, the departmental programs are much smaller. Therefore, the number of students that were asked to fill out the surveys was much smaller. The departments that participated in the study were: Chemistry, English, History, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology, Zoology, and Law Enforcement. Except for six students from the Mathematics Department and one from the English Department, all students had completed at least sixty credits of University work.

The sample was made up of 25 males and 15 females. The difference in males and females may be indicative of the differences in the numbers of men and women pursuing honors, or the fact that two of the eight departments represent science departments and one Mathematics, all of which have larger numbers of men than women.

The Grade Point Average of the students in the sample were:

2.00 - 2.99	7.5%(3)
3.00 - 3.59	55.0%(22)
3.60 - 4.00	37.5%(15)

Over 90 percent of the students had GPA's of 3.0 or better.

The students were asked whether they were or had been members of the General Honors Program. Fifteen departmental honors students (37.5%) said Yes to this

question. This supports the suggestion that the General Honors Program serves as a feeder to the departmental Honors programs. However, when asked how they first learned of the departmental programs, only three students (7.5%) indicated that the GHP was the source of their information.

Student response to the question of how the departmental Honors programs were first learned about suggests that the faculty plays the most important role in this recruitment. Twenty-two students (55%) say that they first learned about the departmental Honors program that they are in from a faculty member.

Students were also asked the three factors most important in their decision to apply to the department honors. The three most often mentioned factors were:

Value of honors in attending graduate school	20 (50%)
Close contact with faculty	20 (50%
Value of honors diploma for a future career choice	18 (45%)

*** Multiple Responses Allowed

Students were then asked about their experiences with the departmental Honors courses that they had taken. The overwhelming response was favorable:

Extremely positive	17 (42.5%)
Positive	19 (47.5%
Neutral	3 (7.5%)
Negative	0
Extremely negative	1 (2.5%)
	N = 40 (100%)

This indicates a very favorable attitude towards the departmental Honors courses taken with 90 percent responding "positive" or "extremely positive." In comparison, 88 percent of the GHP students responded in like fashion concerning Honors Seminars and 75 percent said likewise about H-Versions. This suggests that students are most favorably inclined towards upper level departmental Honors course offerings.

Departmental Honors students were then asked to name the three greatest benefits of participating in a departmental Honors program. Out of the nine possible choices, the three most often chosen responses were:

Opportunity to learn at an enriched and/or accelerated pace	30 (75%)
Closer student-faculty interaction	25 (62.5%)
More individualized instruction	19 (47.5%)

*** Multiple Responses Possible

What this generally indicates is that the departmental Honors students seek an intellectual kind of experience.

Survey Results - Students in the General Honors Program

Surveys were prepared and distributed to students in the General Honors Program. In the fall of 1980, a number of General Honors Seminars (upper and lower levels) and departmental H-Versions were randomly selected for visitation. During these visits, surveys were distributed to students in the General Honors Program and a different survey (to be discussed later) was given to students not in the program. Additionally, in visits to other classes during the fall and spring semesters, when a General Honors student was found, he or she was asked to complete the survey. A copy of the form is found in Appendix C.

A problem that is raised by this procedure is that most of the students included in the sample were known to be actively pursuing Honors work as indicated by their enrollment in an Honors course. Although there were some exceptions, namely students in the General Honors Program located in visits to non-Honors classes, the majority of the students in the sample were taking an Honors course. As a result, there is an absence of information from students not actively pursuing Honors. It is hoped that this loss will be addressed by other discussion in this report, the discussion of the admissions data and conversations with Honors students. As for the survey of General Honors students, it is hoped that this will provide an accurate picture of students actively pursuing Honors and their attitudes towards the courses and program.

The sample was made up of 93 students, of whom 53 were women and 40 were men. The group was largely in their first or second year at the University as indicated by the following credit totals:

0 - 30	49 Students
31 - 60	25
61 - 90	9
90+	9
	1 (Missing)
	N = 93

This indicates that more than half of the students completing the survey (52.7%) were in all probability in their first year at the University. It also indicates that 74 out of 93 (approximately 80%) had completed 60 credits or less.

The Grade Point Average of this group was as follows:

0.00 - 1.99	0
2.00 - 2.99	7
3.00 - 3.59	26
3.60 - 4.00	38
MISSING	22
	N = 93

This suggests that over 90 percent of those responding to the question had GPA's of 3.00 and over. Further, that 53.5 percent of those responding had GPA's of 3.6 and above. The high number of no responses (MISSING) is attributable to the fact that many students were in the first semester of their freshman year, and had not yet earned a GPA at the University.

The students were asked how they first learned about the General Honors Program and were given a range of responses to choose from. Students were allowed to choose more than one response to the question. The most often chosen way in which students first learned about the General Honors Program was from the high school guidance counselor: Forty-one students (44.1%) answered in this way. This is followed closely by statements that they first learned about the GHP from University recruitment (39.8%) and from the University application booklet (39.8%). Since students were allowed to choose more than one answer, it seems that there is a simultaneous impact of these three factors: guidance counselor, application booklet and recruitment efforts. Since guidance is the number one rated answer, it seems important to make sure that guidance counselors in the state have enough information on the Honors programs at UM. This does not seem to be the case if one refers to the guidance issue. (Recall that approximately 40% of guidance counselors in the state responded that they had less than enough or no information at all concerning Honors programs at UM.) This seems to indicate a need to coordinate efforts at providing information about honors at UMCP/University of Maryland.

Students were asked the three most important factors in their decision to apply to the General Honors Program. Eighty-two percent rated small classes in their top three choices. Also highly rated by students were the intellectual challenge (65.5%) and the value of Honors on a future career choice (42%). Rated on the low end of the scale of choices by students was scholarship possibilities (only 1 student chose this as his/her third choice). On-campus housing was

chosen by 17.3 percent of General Honors students as one of their three most important factors in the decision to apply to the General Honors Program.

Students were also asked to judge the significance of the existence of the General Honors Program in their decision to apply to UMCP. Students were asked:

THE FACT THAT A GENERAL HONORS PROGRAM EXISTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND INDUCED ME TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY

Very much	35.5%
Somewhat	25.8%
Hardly	15.1%
Not at all	23.7%
	100.0%** (error due to rounding)

From this, over 60 percent of students responded that the existence of the General Honors Program influenced their decision to apply to UM.

A parallel question asked students the extent to which their acceptance by the GHP helped them decide to attend the University.

Very much	38.7% (36)
Somewhat	21.5% (20)
Hardly	10.8% (10)
Not at all	26.9% (25)
MISSING	2.2% (2)
	100.0% (93) error due to rounding

Over 60 percent of the sample responded that acceptance by the GHP helped them decide to attend the University of Maryland at least somewhat.

The impression that this leaves is that the General Honors Program does, in fact, act as a recruitment arm of the University. Students are attracted by the Honors Program and acceptance is one factor in their decision to attend the University.

A question separate from the recruitment issue concerns the experiences that students have once they are part of the Honors Program. This is a complex issue and is addressed in many parts of this report.

The questionnaires asked Honors students about their perceptions of the Honors Seminars and H-Versions that they had taken. Not all students in the survey had taken Honors courses and, as a result, we only compared the adjusted frequencies of those students who answered the questions. Blanks (no responses) are, therefore, eliminated from the percentage frequencies.

Of this group, 89 students responded to the question concerning their experience with Honors Seminars and 69 students with H-Versions. Students were asked to describe their experience with these courses by choosing one of five basic adjectives:

HONORS SEMINARS		H-VERSIONS
46.1% (41)	Extremely positive	29.0% (20)
34.8% (31)	Positive	46.4% (32)
13.5% (12)	Neutral	18.8% (13)
3.4% (3)	Negative	1.4% (1)
2.2% (2)	Extremely negative	4.3% (3)
100.0% 4		100.0% 24
93	MISSING	93

From this response, over 80 percent of students responding to the question say their experience with Honors Seminars has been positive or extremely positive. This is also the response of over 75 percent of responses concerning H-Versions taken.

On closer inspection, it seems that there is a slightly more favorable attitude of students towards Honors Seminars than H-Versions. This is indicated by the overall positive response of 80.9% (Honors Seminars) versus 75.4% H-Versions. If one looks at the response of "extremely positive" then this impression is confirmed. Whereas H-Versions were rated this way by twenty-nine percent of the relevant population, Honors Seminars were identified as "extremely positive" by forty-six percent of responses. This suggests that Honors Seminars are received more positively than H-Versions.

The reason for the more positive view of Honors Seminars may have to do with the seminar format, the quality of teaching, and the interdisciplinary scope of course content. Perhaps even more interesting than the difference is the similarity of student perceptions towards two very different types of courses.

Students were asked to give two characteristics of the Honors Seminars that they liked the best. In large part, students responded that they liked the teacher, the class atmosphere, the discussions that grew out of the class. Following are a few selected responses which are representative of the sample.

Small class size,

Closer interaction between professor and students,

Great discussion,

High level of intelligence among classmates,

Excellent instructor,
Professor seemed to care about you personally,
Unpressured classroom situation,
Relaxed atmosphere combined with the knowledge that we are expected to give our best,
Subject matter was interesting,
Subject matter was challenging--opened up a new way of thinking,
Less traditional "textbook-type" material in course,
Relevance of assignments, and
I learned to be more honest to myself.

The pattern of responses seems heavily weighted to the idea that small class size and resulting discussion, along with non-traditional subject matter, made for an excellent class. Of course there were many other answers, but the list above gives the reader a representative sample of responses.

Students were also asked to give two characteristics of Honors Seminars that they liked the least. The number of responses to this question were much fewer than to what was liked best; perhaps about one-third as many responses were given. In general, the teacher was criticized as being dull or boring, discussions led nowhere, or course material was considered irrelevant. Below are a sample of student comments to the statement: "Briefly state two characteristics of the worst Honors Seminar you have taken."

Lectures irrelevant to material,
Little analytical questioning,
Little or no relation of material to applications in the real world,
Incredibly high expectations,
Very demanding in the amount of work,
Course work was based purely on memorization,
Did not feel it was challenging enough,
Too much teacher-student, not enough student-student, and
Much unproductive discussion during class time.

Again, the negative responses were much fewer than positive comments with regard to Honors Seminars.

Students were asked the same question concerning the H-Versions that they had taken at the University. Some students had not taken an H-Version (or taken only 1) and therefore responded that they did not feel able to comment. About one-third of the sample had not taken an H-Version and, on the whole, this group left the question blank.

Of the students who responded to the question, about half said that smaller classes and the resulting discussion and close faculty contact were what they liked best about H-Versions. Another set of comments was given which related to the amount of knowledge gained and the intellectual stimulation offered by the H-Versions. Finally, many students commented about the high quality of instruction and of the high quality of the professor. A sample of responses is listed below:

"Think of the best H-Version course that you have had. Briefly state two reasons why you thought it was the best."

Small class size facilitated interaction between professor and students.

I believe I learned more in the H-Version class than I would have in the regular class.

Teacher was fantastic.

The size of the class made it easier to understand than the larger non-H-Version.

More in-depth coverage of topic.

More opportunities for independent work were given.

Sufficiently more challenging without being overwhelming.

Few students and, therefore, a lot of teacher interaction per student.

Students were then asked what they liked least about H-Versions. Again, some students did not answer this question because they had not taken an H-Version. Other students responded "same as above," while still others said they had not experienced a bad class. Of the students who did reply, the major complaints centered on the teacher's effectiveness and the difficulty of the material presented. For the first time, grading became a concern of students. Some of the representative statements to the question

THINK OF THE WORST H-VERSION COURSE THAT YOU HAVE HAD. BRIEFLY STATE TWO REASONS WHY YOU THOUGHT IT WAS THE WORST.

Did not know how to teach undergraduates,

Teacher could not come down to students' level,

Too much theory,

More pressure on individuals,

Students not willing to take part in discussion,

It moved too fast - the material was very difficult,

The courses were very rigorous,

Too much extra material added to regular course,

The exams were not on the material taught,

Tests were from material not in book and were incomprehensible, and

Unfair grading - too subjective.

Reading through this list of descriptors, the reader should note a different emphasis of the dislikes of H-Versions than Honors Seminars. First of all, the number of positive and negative comments about H-Versions was about equal while this was not true for Honors Seminars (many more positive). Second, the criticisms concentrated on the difficulty of material and grading, rather than on the characteristics of the teacher (although there were some of the latter statements as well).

Students were asked to name the aspects of the General Honors Program that they like the most. The question read:

OTHER THAN THE COURSES, THE ASPECTS OF THE GENERAL HONORS PROGRAM THAT I LIKE THE MOST ARE:

The responses indicate a number of features of the program which are important to the student participants. The majority of students responded that Honors Programs provided some sort of "home" in the larger University. This was indicated in responses which located the most important aspect of the program to be social, person-oriented, friendship-developing, etc. The lounge area was also mentioned a number of times to indicate the desirability of having an area which students could call their own, a sort of destination. The presence of a destination on campus was seen to be very important. In this sense, Honors Program accomplishes what R. Lee Hornbake suggested when he said that the creation of the General Honors Program was an attempt to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding University, and give students the impression that their academic and intellectual experiences were of concern to the administration. The idea of student government was also considered by many students to be important as were the benefits of belonging to the GHP, namely "looks good on diploma," "helps in getting into grad school of choice," "housing," "the Honors Citation," etc.

It should also be noted that students overwhelmingly responded to the question of positive aspects to the program. They did not respond to the question of changes in nearly the same degree.

The following are quotes from the student responses and are indicative of the general pattern of response. They are grouped by the sentiment expressed.

The pattern of responses to the question "Other than the courses, the aspects of the General Honors Program that I like the most are:" can be generally put in tabular form in the following way:

People and Social Atmosphere	65 (70%)
Intellectual Climate	18 (19%)
Student Run	10 (11%)
Prestige Factors (Citation, Scholarships, Housing, Graduate School)	17 (18%)
***Multiple Responses Permitted	***

It is possible to see from this chart that the overwhelming response of people in the sample was that the aspect of the General Honors Program that they like best (other than the courses) was the people and social events.

A more interesting understanding of these responses is found by quoting directly from the surveys. These responses are grouped according to the above categories.

The variety of social activities and the "family"like atmosphere;

Personal relationships more easily developed;

Made the University seem less huge;

The friendliness and confidence of honors students;

The chance to meet a lot of interesting new people in the lounge;

The people -- it gives me a nice group to be part of;

I like the social gatherings;

Feeling of belonging;

Getting to know other people in the program, establishing valuable friendships and contacts;

The idea of being 'different' from the other 40,000 people;

Atmosphere -- the interaction I have with other students;

I like the opportunity to exchange ideas with talented and motivated students;

The ability to interact with students of similar caliber, especially on social scale;

Intellectual stimulation;

The general encouragement I have received from the individual attention of professors;

Motivated students in an academic environment;

The availability of the lounge and the chance to meet so many other students with similar interests;

It is a smaller community within a large University;

The committees -- admissions especially;

Student-run;

Students play an important role in determining policy;

The possibility of obtaining a Citation;

Housing available; and

Honors Exchange Program -- I participated in and the students from other schools I've met.

These responses are indicative of the statements given by General Honors students concerning the program.

The next question on the survey asked students to name the aspects of the General Honors Program that they would like to see changed. Here, it was intended that students should comment on what might be changed (other than their likes and dislikes of specific courses). The pattern of response was as follows:

Expand course offerings	11 (11.8%)
Improve social activities Program	15 (16.1%)
Improve administration	8 (8.6%)
Improve student governance	13 (13.9%)
Too elitist	8 (8.6%)
Improve Citation criteria	2 (2.1%)
Not selective enough	1 (1.1%)
***Multiple Responses Permitted	58 ***

Students were then asked to respond to the question: "Other than the courses, the one aspect of the General Honors Program that I would like to see changed is:" Students were asked to write their answers and the summary of responses to this question has already been given. A sample of the specific statements given by students is given below:

More variety of General Honors courses;

Greater balance between the courses offered -- equal number of each in the University areas;

More publicity to get more people involved;

More people involved, more social events;

Not enough of the people who are not actively involved know what is going on;

Make the lounge a friendlier place;

Better outlined requirements for degree in General Honors;

Perhaps a different organization in authority;

Make less room for infighting among student leaders;

I'd like to see some new people in the Executive Council rather than the same "clique;"

It seems to accommodate on-campus students only with its events. Commuters have a difficult time being part of honors;

Eliminate all-honors-students floor or work to improve floor so sense of community there is stronger; and

More access to individual studies program.

Students were also asked whether or not they were planning to work towards a General Honors Citation. Forty-nine students (52.7%) responded 'Yes' to this question. The fact that during 1980 21 students graduated with the Citation in General Honors indicates that this expectation is not always fulfilled. According to student responses, on the questionnaires and in personal interviews, the Citation requirements were unclear and in need of revision. At the time of this writing, the Citation requirements were being revised.

Survey Responses of Students Not in an Honors Program

Survey questionnaires were prepared and distributed to students not in an Honors program at the University of Maryland. In the spring of 1980, a number of classes were visited and the survey questionnaires distributed and then collected. A copy of the form is found in Appendix D.

One problem that is raised by this procedure was that the classes were not randomly selected. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies contacted a number of course instructors, and those that gave permission were then visited. It was proposed that no course would be visited if it had more than 25 students. As a result, most of the classes in the sample were upper level courses. It is hoped that these responses are representative of the student population at the University.

The sample was made up of 166 of whom 99 were males and 67 females. The group was largely in its last two years at the University as is illustrated by the following totals.

0 - 30 credits	4.2% (7) students
31 - 60 credits	13.9% (23)
61 - 90 credits	32.5% (54)
90+ credits	48.8% (81)
MISSING	0.6% (1)
	100.0%(166)

This indicates that more than 80 percent of the sample had completed more than 60 credits at the University.

The Grade Point Averages of this group were:

2.00 - 2.99	36.1% (60)
3.00 - 3.59	51.8% (86)
3.60 - 4.00	12.1% (20)
	100.0%(166)

This shows that almost 75 percent of the students in the sample had GPA's of 3.00 or above. The high total is a function of the particular classes chosen in the sample and may not be representative of the total undergraduate population. However, for the purposes of this study, this group will be representative of some non-honors students at the University.

Students were asked whether they had heard of the General Honors Program and if yes, where had they heard about it. Twenty-eight students (16.9%) said they had never heard of the GHP. The most popular responses of students who had heard of the GHP concerning how they had learned about it were:

UM Application Booklet	58 (34.9%)
Other Students	34 (20.5%)
Honors Students	29 (17.5%)
Never Heard of It	28 (16.9%)

*** Multiple Responses Allowed

Students were also asked whether they had heard of the many departmental Honors programs at the University, and if yes, where had they first learned about them. Forty-three students (25.9%) said that they had never heard of departmental Honors. The most popular response of students who did know of them was from the UM Application Booklet - 54 students or 32.5 percent.

Students were asked whether or not they had taken an Honors course at the University of Maryland. The response was:

Yes	28 (16.9%)
No	138 (83.1%)

In other words, less than one-fifth of the students in the sample had taken an Honors course (of any type) at the University of Maryland. It is possible that some of these students have taken more than one Honors course, and in response to the question of types of Honors courses taken, students said:

HONORS SEMINARS	10
H-Versions	16
Department Honors	9
Other Honors	1

This indicates that some students (8) had taken more than one type of Honors course.

Students were asked why they did not belong to an Honors program at the University and the three most popular responses were:

I felt it would be too demanding	(33) 19.8%
I could not fit it in with my academic program	(27) 16.2%
I felt that I would not be accepted into the Program	(21) 12.6%

***Multiple Responses Allowed

Again, there were other reasons given, but the three explanations above were the most often given reasons for not applying to an Honors program at the University.

Also of interest might be the least often chosen reasons for not applying to an Honors program.

I applied and was rejected	(3) 1.8%
I did not want to be regarded as different	(2) 1.2%
I did not think I would like the method of instruction	(6) 3.6%

*** Multiple Responses Allowed

In addition, five students responded that they are intending to or have recently applied to an Honors program at UMCP.

Students were also asked to check responses to the question of how many students they knew who were in an Honors program at UMCP.

I know the following number of students in an Honors program at UMCP:

0	70 responses
1-2	48
3-5	22
6-10	14
10+	11
MISSING	1
	166

This indicates that over half of the students in the sample know Honors students at the University. To get an indication of how well non-Honors students knew Honors students, we asked that the names of up to three students known to be Honors be written. We then counted the number of names written by each of the students in the sample.

0 names written	86
1 name written	32
2 names written	12
3 names written	36
	166

This indicates that of the 95 students who said that they know Honors students, 80 (84.2%) were able to write down names. This is interpreted as more than a passing knowledge of a person; it is seen as a more definite acquaintance.

Finally, we asked these students about their feelings about Honors courses/programs at the University. Students were given four alternatives to choose from concerning these feelings about Honors:

"My general feeling about Honors courses/programs at the University is that they":

are good for campus	88 (53%)
don't make any difference	18 (10.8%)
are bad for campus	2 (1.2%)
no feeling one way or the other	53 (31.9%)
MISSING	5 (3.0%)
	166

This illustrates a positive attitude on the part of the students in the sample. Over half respond that Honors are good for campus, and although a large number have no feeling one way or the other, the negative response concerning Honors is very small (2 students).

ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL HONORS PROGRAM

The single largest effort on the College Park campus, aimed at providing opportunities for intellectually able students, is the General Honors Program (GHP). At the present time approximately 1,000 students who attend the University have applied and been accepted into the program.

The General Honors Program is housed in the basement of Hornbake Library and the space it occupies includes a lounge area, classroom, Director and Assistant Director's offices, secretarial office, and mimeo room. The lounge area is set up so that students can sit on couches that are set up in a U-shape or sit around a long table which seats about twelve to fifteen students. Off the main lounge area is the classroom, the secretaries' office and the office of the Assistant Director, Dr. Faith Gabelnick. Adjoining the area where the secretaries work is the office of the Director, Dr. John L. Howarth.

The staff of the General Honors Program consists of a Director, an Assistant Director with a 2/3 teaching load, one faculty line, one secretary, one half-time secretary, and two part-time secretaries. A large portion of the professional staff time is tied up in teaching Honors Seminars. According to the Director, about one-fourth of the operating budget is spent on the recruitment of high ability students.

Who Belongs to the General Honors Program

For the most part, students enter the General Honors Program in the first semester of their freshman year. High school students find out about the program in a number of ways. The University application booklet has a small section about Honors:

> The creative, self-reliant, and academically talented student may wish to apply for entrance into the General Honors Program directly from high school. General Honors is not a major field in itself, but can be accommodated to any area of concentration on the College Park campus... (UM Admissions Booklet, 1981 - 2:4-5).

In addition, meetings are held around the State to recruit academically able students. General Honors students often attend these meetings and answer

questions about the program or distribute literature about the program to parents and students. The GHP also recruits students by visiting high schools, talking at assemblies, and inviting teachers and guidance counselors to College Park.

Admission to the GHP

To be admitted to the General Honors Program, a student must submit a separate application consisting of high school transcripts, letters of recommendation, and an essay. The student's high school guidance counselor must complete a form which contains information about the student's class size, rank, SAT scores, and National Merit Selection Index. The deadline for admission for the 1981-1982 year is February 15, 1981.

Admissions is decided by a committee of General Honors students. Approximately 25 students work on the committee which is divided into three or four separate groups, each headed by a co-chair. One of the co-chairs is also the chairperson, and is expected to have experiences in the process by virtue of having worked on admissions the previous year. Members of the admissions committee are selected by the chair or co-chairs.

The admissions committee evaluates the applications of students applying to the program. There is no absolute criterion for admission and each application is reviewed by three or more people. A faculty member (usually Dr. Howarth or Dr. Gabelnick) sits in on some meetings of each of the admissions subcommittees. Special consideration is given to extracurricular activities and the essay because the view is held that Honors means more than getting good grades or doing well on tests. If there is disagreement among committee members, the application is reconsidered and the student may be asked to come for an interview.

Approximately three-fourths of the students who submit applications are accepted into the program. In the past year there were close to 500 applicants of whom perhaps 350 were accepted by the program. Since admissions to the University is decided separately, it is entirely possible for a student to be rejected by the University though accepted into the program, and of course the opposite is also possible (accepted by UM and rejected by GHP). Also some students accepted by the program choose to attend other universities though acceptance by the GHP is a motivating factor for students to attend UMCP.

Ultimately it is hard to characterize all General Honors students. They are more than just test smart and tend to be thought of as intellectually "alive." The mean SAT score for 1980 is 1230 (Math, 640; Verbal, 590) but there is no set of maxi factors which automatically guarantees admissions. A great deal of time and effort is spent on reading student essays and making admissions decisions. However, it is not clear that the very best students on campus are necessarily the ones who decide to join the General Honors Program. And although there is an Internal Recruitment Committee which encourages students already at the University to apply, the great majority of students enter the program in the first semester of their freshman year.

Participation in the General Honors Program

After a student is accepted into the General Honors Program, he or she is encouraged to participate in a number of ways. A student may decide to enroll in one of two types of Honors courses, the Honors Seminar or the H-Version. A student may also decide to live in Honors housing, participate in social activities, relax in the Honors Lounge or choose not to participate in these ways.

Scholarship Possibilities

According to the Director of the GHP, Dr. John Howarth, scholarship aid is the most important of a list of variables in recruiting new students. For the year 1980-1981, the GHP offered five $500.00 Freshman Honors Scholarships, and for the year 1981-82, 80 $500.00 scholarships are planned (of which 20 will go to incoming freshmen). In addition, $100.00 Sklar Awards are offered to a maximum of six students active in the program. The John T. Portz Scholarship is also given by the GHP to the junior in the program who has contributed the most to honors while achieving excellence. A number of best projects awards are also given to GHP students for work in two categories: (1) scholarly papers in any area, either critical, analytical, or experimental; and (2) creative projects in writing, visual, or performing arts, or in any other area.

GHP students also receive special counseling on how to apply for awards outside of the program. For example, students are given special consideration in

being told how to best apply for the Truman Scholarship. Similar attention is given to GHP students nominated for the Rhodes Scholarship. In general, many scholarship and fellowship opportunities are channeled through the GHP and the program serves as a center for opportunities for academically able students.

Student Governance

One of the most important aspects of the General Honors Program is student involvement. Whether out of necessity or as a function of policy, for many years the GHP has encouraged student involvement. Today, decisions are made collaboratively between administrators, students, and faculty. Students decide who is admitted to the program, where recruitment efforts should concentrate, and a wide range of other activities. Students have input into what courses should be offered and who will teach them. Students take charge of evaluations, advising, and social activities. Students run a campus-wide tutorial program and participate in other service-related programs.

Intellectual Benefits

The General Honors Program aims at providing challenging educational activities to academically talented students. The program attempts to provide environments that enrich the student's general education while fostering interdisciplinary study. This is in contrast to the departmental programs which give students the opportunity to pursue in greater depth their specialist studies.

According to the Director of the GHP, Dr. John L. Howarth, goals of the Honors program include enhancing the intellectual atmosphere, educational levels, and student abilities in the University as a whole, while helping Honors students pursue specific education and career goals.

Few intellectual activities of a non-classroom nature are found in the GHP and it is suggested that an increase in these activities would serve and enhance the goals of the program.

Social Benefits

An area of satisfaction that seems to develop among Honors students comes from living in close proximity, attending the same classes, and being able to generally "hang out" together. The GHP makes a particular effort at encouraging these relationships by providing an area in which Honors students can relax and talk with each other. There are also a number of planned social activities in which GHP may participate including movies, bowling, outings, and field trips.

The Lounge

The General Honors lounge is a place where GHP students come to sit, eat, do crossword puzzles, share homework and course assignments, and relax. One student said that the lounge area was the only quiet, smokeless place for a commuter to eat lunch. The lounge area is connected to the Honors offices which include rooms for the secretaries, the Director and Assistant Director, a classroom, and a machine room. It is the heart of the program because all that passes through the program comes to the lounge and connected suite of offices.

On visits to the lounge it was noted that much of the discussion revolved around school work, and one got the feeling that doing well in school was considered to be important. It was also noted that not that many people were ever in the lounge at any one time, and many of the same people were seen on repeat visits. In spite of the large number of students in the GHP (1000), perhaps only 100 or so actively participated in the program in ways other than taking an Honors Seminar.

It is suggested that one of the reasons General Honors students earn higher grades and make better progress at the University is because of the time that talented students are able to spend with each other.

Honors Housing

The availability of housing on campus does seem to motivate students to attend the University of Maryland and is mentioned as a consideration of those choosing to attend the University. No evidence supports the view that a special housing

facility for Honors students is desirable. Friendships among Honors students do seem to develop in classes and in the lounge. Friendships between Honors and non-Honors students also develop and are seen favorably by Honors students.

Community Benefits

The GHP sponsors a number of community service activities. The North Lake Project enlists GHP students to teach a small group of intellectually gifted elementary school students. GHP students are in charge of and staff the tutorial program on the College Park campus.

Retentions

At the time of this writing there is no retention policy in the GHP. All students who are admitted to the program are allowed to continue regardless of the time they put in or the grades they earn. There is a restriction on holding office and committee assignment (3.2 GPA) but none is placed on participating in activities or taking classes. Past abuses of the retention policy were given as the reason for the absence of a more definitive rule.

The Citation in General Honors

Students may decide to work towards a Citation in General Honors. The Citation (and transcript recognition) is offered to students woh have completed 30 credit hours of prescribed coursework including 15 hours of lower level and 15 hours of upper level work. Some of the courses satisfy other University requirements. A student must also complete a special project to earn the Citation.

As described earlier, less than 10 percent of GHP students actually earn the Citation. One reason for this is the difficulty of squeezing 30 hours of coursework into additional requirements for graduation. Another reason may be the view held by many in the program, that the Honors experience cannot be defined in terms of the Citation. A final reason has to do with the senior thesis or project which some students view with trepidation.

General Honors Seminars

The General Honors Seminars are taught by a faculty from within and from outside of the University. Part of the responsibility of faculty at UMCP chosen as "Distinguished Scholar-Teachers" is to teach an Honors Seminar. Other times, a faculty member will express the desire to teach such a course or a community leader will be asked to do so, depending on the area of expertise. Sometimes a student will co-teach a course as part of the Citation requirements.

There is no formal approval of courses by a University committee outside of the program. The GHP does undergo a triennial review which is concerned specifically with the content of the Honors Seminars. However, there are advantages and disadvantages to this procedure. On the one hand, it provides a freeing influence which allows for experimental courses and encourages curricular development. Conversely, there is no external check on whether the Seminars are enriched/accelerated, and whether they best serve the needs of the Honors students.

Transfer Students

For transfer students and in-house applicants, there is a set of application requirements similar to those for incoming freshmen. Citation requirements are made in proportion to the student's academic year at the University.

However, the vast number of students enter the GHP as freshmen. It is suggested that encouraging able students already at the University or entering after the freshman year to apply to the GHP serves the goals of an Honors Program. Students with certain GPA's at the University could be automatically invited to join the program.

Minority Students in Honors

The observations being made so far lead to the conclusion that great care is being given to the identification and encouragement of academically talented students. Emphasis placed on recruiting able minority students is also part of this goal. The Black Student Honors Caucus already exists at the University and its existence encourages minority students. Benjamin Banneker Scholars are

minority students automatically given admission to the GHP. For the year 1980-81, almost half (6 out of 13) of the students on the Executive Council of the GHP were minority students.

Summary Statement

Students in the General Honors Program at UMCP receive special attention and rewards. Honors students are described as progressing at a faster pace and achieving higher grades than their non-Honors peers.

One question that the research on the GHP raises relates to the future growth and development of the program. Among many possible scenarios, four are described below.

Expanding the General Honors Program is the first possibility and has the advantage of allowing more students to receive special attention (and possibly impact their University experience). In addition, General Honors aids the recruitment effort and a larger program might attract more and better students to the University. However, there are several potential disadvantages to expansion. In all likelihood some ceiling beyond which the gains of an expanded program are outweighed by the problems caused exists. It is also unclear whether the quality of the intellectual experience can be maintained if the size of the program is increased. Finally, additional financial support is necessary for growth.

The argument for a smaller General Honors Program might be that a smaller and more selective program could better serve the needs of the very brightest and ablest students at the University. If one purpose of Honors is to prevent the cream from going sour, the richer the cream, the more that is possible. A very selective Honors Program might also be able to concentrate on intellectual growth which in turn might attract even better students to the University. The disadvantage is that since fewer students would be served by such a program, it would be more difficult to defend against charges of elitism.

A third possibility is to keep the program at its present size. Here, one might argue that it has taken almost two decades for the program to grow and that at its present level, many students are able to participate. This also suggests

that the present balance between General Honors and departmental Honors appears to work, and allows students at all stages of their University work to participate in Honors. For those who feel that General Honors does not meet the needs of the most able students, this is not a satisfactory answer.

A final scenario might suggest the creation of two separate Honors Programs, one which functions much like General Honors, the other which encourages more independent study. This would allow students to work at a range of levels based on the desire and ability of the individual.

Policy makers need to examine the findings of this study to make their own determination about the ways in which Honors best serves the needs of the University community.

ANALYSIS OF THE ADMISSIONS DATA

This part of the status study on honors looks at a selected sample of students identified by the University of Maryland Admissions Office as Academically Talented (AT). This designation is based on the student's high school grade point average and combined Math and Verbal SAT scores. Included on the lists provided by the Admissions Office are all students with a combined SAT of 1200 (900 for Minority) enrolled and attending the University since the fall of 1976. In the fall of 1980, a grade point average of 3.0 was added to the SAT criteria for AT.[1]

The sample presents one real problem in that all students that have left the University before the fall of 1978 have been "archived" and their names do not appear on the AT lists. As such transfer students, drop-outs, or any others that have left the University before fall 1978 are excluded from the sample population. As a result, grade point averages and other kinds of academic experiences are skewed with one kind of experience (leaving the University) cut-off. However, since this applies to both the honors and non-honors students in the sample, comparisons should be equally affected. Thus the number of "archived" students makes no difference. Also, since many of the AT's in the sample enrolled after the fall of 1978, their experience will still be recorded.

The Admissions Office at UMCP prepared four lists from which the sample was selected. The lists were divided according to the student's race and according to the year of first enrollment. The names of students appeared in one of the following lists:

(1) Minority, Fall 1980
(2) Majority, Fall 1980
(3) Minority, Fall 1976 to Fall 1979
(4) Majority, Fall 1976 to Fall 1979

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[1] (1) Fall 1980 Academically Talented students are defined as:

MAJORITY - COMBINED SAT GE 1200
AND H.S. GPA GE 3.00
or NM = 1,2,3 (Nat'l Merit)
MDS = 1,2,3,4 (MD. Distinguished Scholar))

MINORITY - COMBINED SAT GE 900
AND H.S. GPA GE 3.00
or NM, NA = 1,2,3,4
MDS = 1,2,3,4

(2) Fall 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979 AT are defined as the same as above except that there was no grade point average requirement.

The total number of students represented by this population is 3417 and of this number, 192 students were selected at random to form the sample.[2]

It was decided that all students entering the University in the fall of 1980 would be considered freshmen, regardless of transfer credits, and that all other students would be considered upperclassmen, again regardless of the actual number of credits earned.

Minority status was assigned to all students identifying themselves in categories other than white in UMCP demographic questionnaires. No information was collected on specific minorities within this population.

Description of the Sample

In terms of numbers the sample turned out to be:

Freshmen	57 (29.7%)
Upperclassmen	135 (70.3%)
Total	N = 192(100%)

What may be immediately apparent is that the numbers of students identified as AT by the University over the past five years have increased. Since upperclassman is used to designate students entering any of four years and freshman is used to name those entering in the fall of 1980 only, one might expect a ratio of 4 to 1, upperclassmen to freshmen. In fact, there are slightly more than twice as many upperclassmen as freshmen. This may be accounced for by the fact that students who left the University before fall, 1978 do not appear on the lists. It may also be indicative of the priority that the University has set in recent years, to attract academically able students.

In terms of race, the sample looks as follows:

Minority	49 (25.5%)
Majority	143 (74.5%)
Total	N = 192 (100%)

The large numbers of minority students in the sample may reflect the different SAT scores required of majority and minority students (1200 versus 900). Or it may reflect the large numbers of minority students at the University. Either way, minorities represent a significant part of the sample.

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[2]With few exceptions, every twentieth name was selected. In an instance where an error was made (a student appeared incorrectly on the list or there was a duplication) the next name on the list was chosen. Since the lists are not perfectly divisible by the number 20 there will be an error of perhaps 1 student in each group (too many or too few).

In terms of sex, the sample looks as follows:

Male	89 (46.4%)
Female	103 (53.6%)
Total	192 (100%)

This may reflect the larger number of females than males in the population from which the sample is drawn. It does not indicate a statistically significant difference between males and females in the sample. And in fact, the numbers are pretty close (46.4 versus 53.6).

Since the study concerns Honors at the University, it was decided that admission lists could provide an opportunity to compare the experiences of AT students in the General Honors Program and those not in the GHP. The transcripts of both groups of students were available and although the transcript by itself is not a total picture of University experiences, it does provide a portrait of the academic experiences/achievements. Thus a comparison between GHP students and their somewhat matched non-GHP peers was possible.

The 192 names on the sample were checked with the General Honors Program and it was found that 36 of the 192 students were members of the General Honors Program.

General Honors Program Student	
Yes	36 (18.2%)
No	156 (81.8%)
	M = 192 (100%)

Thus, 18.2 percent of the sample were members of the General Honors Program.[3]

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[3]The 18.2 percent representation of AT's in the GHP is many times the number that would occur by chance. Since the GHP admissions policy is not based on SAT and GPA alone, it is difficult to interpret whether this number is lower or higher than one might expect.
However, it is possible to achieve an estimate of the significance of this figure by multiplying 18.2 percent times 3517 (the total number of AT's). This suggests that over the past five years 634 AT's will have been members of the GHP. If the actual enrollment during this period had been 700, the AT's account for 634/700 or a little better than 90 percent of the GHP membership comes from the AT lists. If the number of AT's are increased, this percentage will correspondingly increase.
This is really not surprising since the 1200 and 3.00 criteria is probably a little lower than the average GHP student's scores.

The GHP subsample can be further described in a number of ways. For example, by looking at the race of GHP students, one finds:

General Honors Program

		Yes	No	Total
Race	Minority	5	44	49
	Majority	31	112	143
			N = 192	

By looking at the table above, one notes that 5 out of 36 or 13.9 percent of GHP students are minorities, while 31 out of 36 (86.1%) of GHP students are majority students. Minorities in the GHP are about half the expected percentage (25.5% in sample, 13.9% minorities in GHP subsample). This may be attributed to the fact that the GHP does not have special criteria based on minority status, such as the one which was used by the Admissions Office in preparing the AT lists.

In contrast to the previous description, if one looks at the sex distribution of GHP, it turns out:

General Honors Program

		Yes	No	Total
Sex	Male	16	73	89
	Female	20	83	103
			N = 192	

Since there are more women than men in the overall sample, it is not surprising that there are more women than men in the GHP subsample as well and percentages of males and females are fairly equal for both (53.6% females in total sample, 55.5% females in the GHP).

Finally, if one looks at GHP membership by sex, controlling for race, there is an interesting result. Whereas the number of majority GHP males and females is about the same (15 males, 16 females), there is a much higher percentage of minority females than males in the GHP (1 male, 4 females). Although the numbers are quite small (only five minority members are in the GHP) the fact that 80 percent of GHP minorities are female causes one to at least question why this might be the case. One possible conclusion is that minority males are particularly under-represented in the General Honors Program. It is suggested that this possibility be considered.

In addition to race, sex, and class at UM, a number of other factors that were deemed relevant to a discussion of a student's academic experience are found on a student transcript. These include the number of semesters enrolled at UMCP, transfer and Advanced Placement credits, first and last semesters attended, summer sessions and credits earned, total credits earned at UMCP, grade point average, degree date, numbers and kinds of honors courses and H-Versions taken. These factors were coded on computer punch cards and prepared for use in a variety of statistical programs.

The procedure used to analyze the data was fairly straightforward. All relevant factors were coded and punched on computer cards. A data element was created, on batch mode, which was accessed through the remote terminal in the CERD offices. A series of files containing SPSS program decks were created on demand mode, and the data and programs were accessed at the remote site. Results were also printed at this site.[4] Basically, the SPSS procedures that were used to analyze the data included CONDESCRIPTIVE, FREQUENCIES, CROSSTABS and MULTIPLE REGRESSION.

It was hoped that in addition to the kinds of population descriptions shown previously, that evidence could be found to support the hypothesis that real differences existed between the academic experiences of the AT's in Honors and the AT's not in the GHP. Although causality would not be proved, it might then be possible to suggest that certain outcomes are at least associated with participation in the GHP. In this way, hypotheses that had been previously suggested through observations and interviews could be supported or rejected.

Evidence gained in observing and talking with honors students suggested an emphasis on academic achievement which might lead to different emphases placed on grades and academic achievement. Contrary to what previous researchers have reported to be student attitudes ("anyone can earn good grades and that the smartest don't get the best grades necessarily"--see notes), the GHP membership might have a different ethic towards grades and success which says: "Intelligence is indicated by grades earned and difficulty of courseload." Thus, a pro-grade/achievement ethos may be a function of Honors program participation.

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[4] On occasion, if there were over 25 pages of print-out results, the high-speed printer was used instead. This involved a single command which transferred results from CERD offices to the main computer center at UMBC. All computer analysis was done on the UNIVAC 1108 computer.

Two specific questions that came to mind were: (1) Did those students that participated in the General Honors Program have significantly different grade point averages than their non-Honors peers? (2) Did the students that participated in Honors proceed in their University careers differently than non-Honors students, or more simply, did Honors students make better progress at the University than the non-Honors students in the sample?

One last point needs to be stated. The original sample was taken in November of 1980. Students enrolling for the first time in the fall of 1980 (freshmen) had no grades listed (other than an occasional summer course). Therefore, in February 1981, the first semester grades were collected for this subset of the sample. In this way, grades were available for all members of the sample.

Crosstabulations

One of the first analyses accomplished was the test of whether there was any relationship between grades and Honors. Grade point averages were divided into upper and lower sections with 3.05 the cut-off between the two groups. (This was close to the mediam and 95 students were in the high GPA's with 97 having low GPA's.) The results are presented below:

		General Honors Program		
		Yes	No	Total
Grade Point Average (GPA)	Low (Less than 3.05)	9 (25%)	86 (55.1%)	95
	High (3.05 or more)	27 (75%)	70 (44.9%)	97
		36	156	

N = 192

Notice from this table that 75 percent of the GHP students are in the high GPA group with 25 percent in the low group. For the AT's not in the GHP, it is split much more evenly with 45 percent in the high GPA group and 55 percent in the low group. Statistically as well as educationally significant differences between the AT's in Honors and those not in Honors are indicated (Chi Square significant at leas than .05).

In order to check on the reliability of this estimate, GPA was divided into four nearly equal groups and crosstabulated with GHP membership. The results show an even greater difference between the achievement pattern of Honors and non-Honors students and are presented below:

General Honors Program

		Yes	No	
	Low (0 to 2.45)	3	41	
Grade	Med-Low (2.451 to 3.05)	6	45	
Point	Med-High (3.051 to 3.5)	7	42	
Average	High (3.51 to 4.0)	20	28	
(GPA)	Total	36	156	N = 192

Whereas 55.6 percent of the Honors students are in the highest GPA range (above 3.5), 17.9 percent of the non-Honors students are in this range. Similarly, while 8.3% of the Honors students are in the low GPA range (0 to 2.45), 26.3% of non-Honors students are present. And although one might argue that the ranges do not represent exactly 25 percent of the scores, it should be definitely clear to the reader that the Honors students have higher GPA's, as a group, than the non-Honors students (Chi square significant at .0001).

There may be many possible explanations for why this is the case but this will not change the finding; GHP students achieve higher grades than their non-GHP peers.

One factor that may account for the difference is that the GHP group has a much larger concentration of freshmen than the non-GHP group (41% versus 27%). To see whether or not this relationship accounted for the variation in GPA, a cross-tabulation of GPA with GHP membership was done, controlling for students' class at UM. The findings show that 2/3 of the GHP freshmen had high GPA while 1/3 of the non-GHP freshmen were in this category. For upperclassmen, 80 percent of the GHP's had high GPA's while 50 percent of the non-GHP's scored similarly. What is indicated is that regardless of class at UM, Honors students are achieving higher grades than non-Honors students.

Another possible explanation for this is that the General Honors Program recruits the most talented of the AT's. To check this possibility we looked at the SAT scores of all students in the sample and found significant differences

between the SAT of those AT's in the GHP and those AT's not in the Honors Program. This was substantiated by using a step-wise multiple regression analysis which showed that less than .001 of the difference in GPA's could be accounted for by SAT scores.

In addition to GPA's, it was felt that progress at the University was an important factor in understanding a student's college experience. Progress was calculated by dividing the number of credits earned at UMCP by the number of semesters enrolled. Although this ignores transfer, advanced placement, and summer school credits, it was felt that progress was a reasonable construct. In order to check on this assumption, progress was crosstabulated with GPA and it was found that the two are strongly associated (Chi Square significant at .0001).

The sample was then divided into two equal groups with students earning less than 14.8 credits per semester assigned to the Low Progress category and students earning 14.8 or more credits per semester assigned to the High Progress category. The results are presented below:

General Honors Program

	Yes	No	Total
High Progress	63.9% (23)	46.8% (73)	96
Low Progress	36.1% (13)	53.2% (83)	96
	100.0% (36)	100.0% (156)	N = 192

Almost two-thirds of Honors students have High Progress while about half of non-Honors students achieved likewise. Although statistically this does not appear to be significant (Chi Square is significant at .0961 and by convention this is not statistically significant), the educational significance is apparent. A much higher percentage of Honors students progress at a higher rate than do non-Honors students.

Another area of interest was the majors that Honors and non-Honors students chose at UMCP. As stated earlier, the GHP subsample contained a larger concentration of freshmen than the non-Honors group (41% to 27%). It is not surprising, therefore, that a larger percentage of Honors students were found to have an undecided major. This is born out by the statistics which show that 16.7 percent of the Honors students were undecided while only 3.8 percent of the non-Honors group was likewise.

A more interesting piece of information is revealed by the fact that almost 35 percent of the total sample (66 out of 192) listed the College of Engineering

as their major. Of this total 19.4 percent (7 out of 36) of the Honors students and 37.8 percent (59 out of 156) of the non-Honors list engineering as their major of choice.

Also of interest were the kinds and numbers of Honors courses taken by the AT's. As mentioned previously, there is more than one kind of Honors course at UMCP. There are H-Versions (enriched versions of regular courses taught under the jurisdiction of a particular department) and Honors Seminars (100 and 300 level interdisciplinary courses staffed and taught by the General Honors Program).

It was found that Honors students in the sample were much more likely to have taken an Honors Seminar than non-Honors AT's. Twenty-two out of 36 Honors students had enrolled in an Honors 100 Seminar compared with two out of 156 of the non-Honors students. Since Honors Seminars are meant specifically for Honors students (GHP students), this finding is not surprising.

With regard to the pattern of H-Version enrollment, a similar pattern is evident. While two-thirds of the Honors students in the sample had taken at least one H-Version, less than 10 percent of the non-Honors students had done likewise. This is a more surprising result since H-Versions are normally open to anyone a department deems able enough to enroll in the course. It is suggested that Honors students are encouraged to take the more demanding curriculum that is offered in the H-Version while the non-Honors students receive no such encouragement.[5]

Finally, it was deemed of interest whether Honors students taking an Honors 100 Seminar in their semester at UMCP experience a different commitment to the General Honors Program than those taking the course in a later semester. Commitment was judged on the basis of taking an Honors 300 Seminar at a later date. Though the numbers are quite small (only seven students had taken Honors 300), there did not seem to be any significant difference among them in terms of taking Honors 100 in their first or a later semester. At the same time, it was found that a student who dropped out of Honors 100 tended not to take it again, and not to take Honors 300 at all. (There were two such students who dropped Honors 100 in the sample.)

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[5] According to the Data Research Center's "Summary and Discussion of Student Grades, Spring 1980," the grades in Honors Seminars have a quality point average of at least .50 above the academic division of which it is part. This finding is also reported for the Spring 1979 and Fall 1978 semesters. Since many Honors students take these Honors Seminars, and the grading is higher, it may be possible to suggest that Honors students are being graded in a slightly different way than non-Honors students.

The last finding in this analysis of transcripts shows that Honors students are more likely to come to the University with Advanced Placement credits than non-Honors AT's. Whereas 44.4 percent of the Honors students came to UMCP with at least three AP credits, only 19.9 percent of non-Honors AT's had a similar record. More startling perhaps is the fact that eight out of 36 (22.2%) of Honors students had more than 6 AP credits while this was true of only 5.1 percent of the non-Honors AT's.

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